

## Department of Education and Early Development

### Mission

To ensure quality standards-based instruction to improve academic achievement for all students.

### Core Services

- Provide and evaluate a Comprehensive Student and School Standards, Assessment and Accountability System for all students and schools in Alaska that is based on student, school, educator, and culturally responsive standards and state and federal requirements.
- Provide and support standards-based professional development and mentoring for Alaska's educators to ensure high quality and student achievement.
- Provide a statewide program to ensure all students have the foundational skills required for a successful transition to college and/or the workforce after high school.
- Secure and award state, federal, and private educational funding to school districts and other educational organizations to result in higher student achievement.
- Providing high quality data to school districts and stakeholders through the use of the Alaska Statewide Longitudinal Data System

End Result	Strategies to Achieve End Result
<p><b>A: Students demonstrate growth in academic achievement, demonstrating continuous growth, and meeting Proficiency or higher, on assessments defined in the Alaska Comprehensive System of Statewide Assessment.</b></p> <p><u>Target #1:</u> Increase the number of students who achieve proficiency in reading, writing, mathematics, and science by 1% annually.</p> <p><u>Status #1:</u> In 2009, 79.5% of the students tested in grades 3-10 were proficient in reading, 75.8% in writing, 68.5% in mathematics, and 54.6% in science. The science assessment is administered in grades 4, 8 &amp; 10. Proficiency rates increased in science (1.9%) and in writing (2.2%) compared to 2008. Proficiency rates decreased in reading (-2.2%) and in mathematics (-1.7%) compared to 2008.</p> <p><u>Target #2:</u> Increase to at least 90% the number of students that achieve a proficient score on all three content areas of the state high school graduation qualifying exam after all opportunities to take the exam.</p> <p><u>Status #2:</u> The 2009 cohort (students who first took the exam in 2007) has an overall proficient rate of 90.3%, an increase of 2.9% from 2008.</p> <p><u>Target #3:</u> Maintain proficient and higher achievement, and increase growth of individual student achievement on Alaska's Standard Based Assessments (SBA).</p> <p><u>Status #3:</u> The percentage of students who scored proficient or higher on the SBA in 2008 and maintained that score in 2009 was 65.9% in reading, 60.1% in</p>	<p><b>A1: Ensure students are learning the grade level expectations for reading, writing and mathematics as defined in the "Alaska Standards: Content and Performance Standards for Alaska Students" Fourth Edition.</b></p> <p><u>Target #1:</u> Increase the use of strategies to diagnose and target instruction through "Response to Instruction/Intervention" (RTI).</p> <p><u>Status #1:</u> The department provides training, overview sessions, and has established a statewide leadership team on Response to Instruction/Intervention (RTI) to assist the department in providing guidance on use of the RTI framework to improve instructional practices. The department requires state intervened districts to use RTI.</p> <p><u>Target #2:</u> Ensure that districts understand both the purpose and how to implement the interim and formative assessments.</p> <p><u>Status #2:</u> The department will offer half-day trainings on formative assessments in Fall 2009 and Spring 2010 for District Testing Coordinators, and four additional trainings for districts in 2009-2010.</p> <p><u>Target #3:</u> Through Mentorship reduce the turnover rate for teachers.</p> <p><u>Status #3:</u> The Alaska Statewide Mentorship Program documented a preliminary retention of 81% of first-year teachers in all districts in FY09. The retention rate of urban first-year teachers for FY09 was 87% and 79% for rural districts.</p>

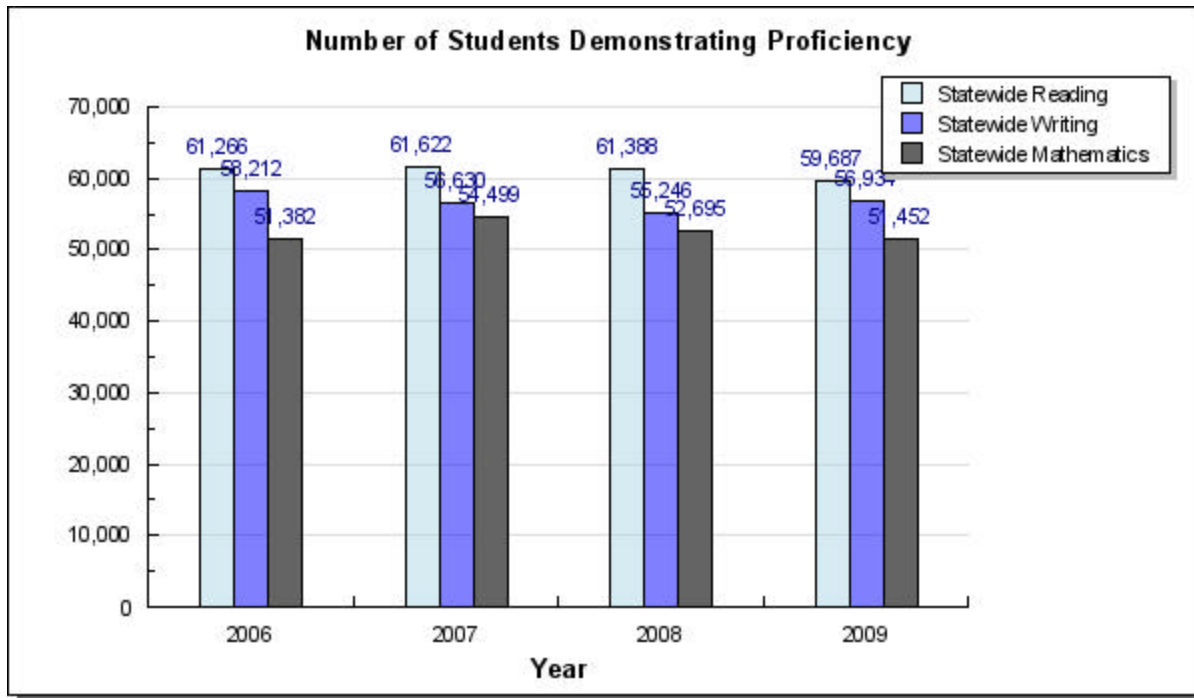
<p>writing, and 52.5% in mathematics. Comparing percentages from 2008, the 2009 proficient trend is a decline in both reading and math, but an increase in writing.</p>	<p><u>Target #4:</u> Ensure that all school districts have tools to train staff about the standards, the assessment system that measures the standards, and about the performance of the students in their district.</p> <p><u>Status #4:</u> The department has provided all educators in Alaska multiple tools, publications, and trainings regarding the standards and assessment system that allows for analysis of student performance. EED has conducted curriculum alignment institutes and has designed the formative assessment system to be included into District Test Coordinator training.</p>
End Result	Strategies to Achieve End Result
<p><b>B: Increase the Statewide Graduation Rate.</b></p> <p><u>Target #1:</u> Increase the statewide student graduation rates by 2% a year</p> <p><u>Status #1:</u> 66% of students graduated on time for the 2008-2009 school year, which represents an increase of 3.4% over the 2007-2008 school year.</p>	<p><b>B1: Improve statewide student graduation rates by implementing statewide WorkReady / CollegeReady curriculum and assessment program.</b></p> <p><u>Target #1:</u> Increase the number of students receiving a Career Readiness Certificate</p> <p><u>Status #1:</u> In 2009, 611 students received a Career Readiness Certificate. School years 2008-2010 are the pilot implementation years for the program. Regulations currently require full implementation in all schools in 2010-2011.</p>

## Performance Detail

### A: Result - Students demonstrate growth in academic achievement, demonstrating continuous growth, and meeting Proficiency or higher, on assessments defined in the Alaska Comprehensive System of Statewide Assessment.

**Target #1:** Increase the number of students who achieve proficiency in reading, writing, mathematics, and science by 1% annually.

**Status #1:** In 2009, 79.5% of the students tested in grades 3-10 were proficient in reading, 75.8% in writing, 68.5% in mathematics, and 54.6% in science. The science assessment is administered in grades 4, 8 & 10. Proficiency rates increased in science (1.9%) and in writing (2.2%) compared to 2008. Proficiency rates decreased in reading (-2.2%) and in mathematics (-1.7%) compared to 2008.



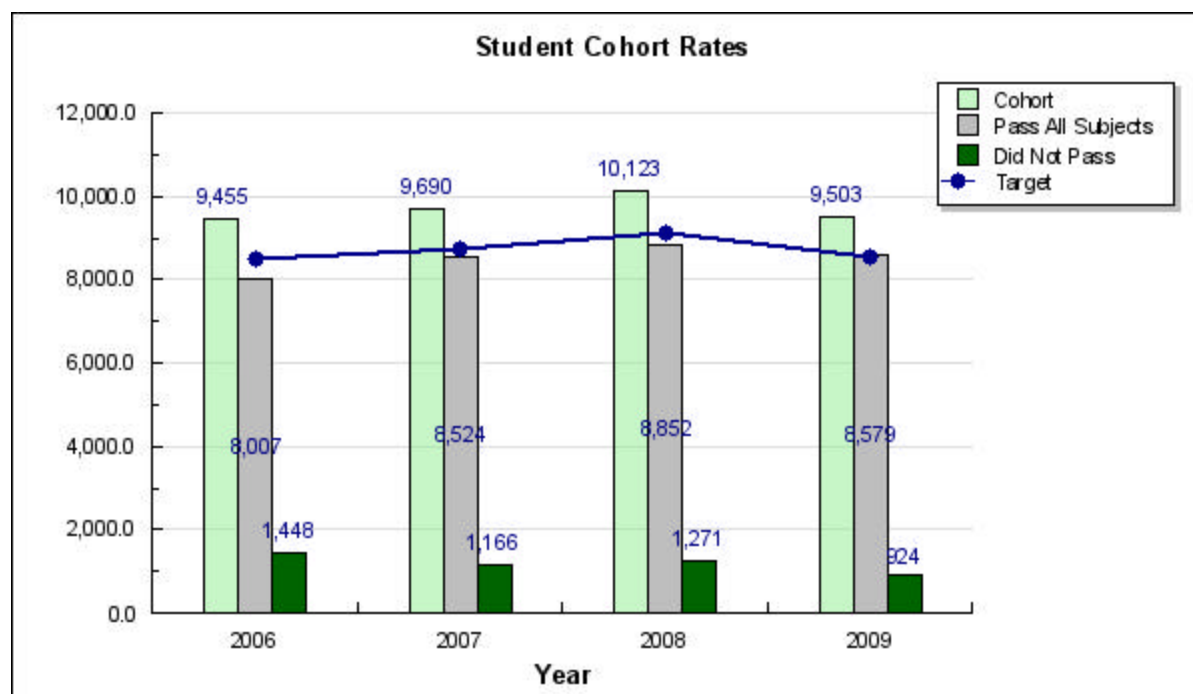
*Methodology: Data reporting is based on the school year.*

**Analysis of results and challenges:** The academic achievement of students participating in Alaska's Standards Based Assessment (SBA) is high. The vast majority of our students in grades 3-10 are scoring at or above proficient in reading, writing and mathematics. When considering all students tested in all grades, increases were observed in science and writing in 2009, while proportionate decreases in mathematics and reading were identified. However, in comparison between 2006 and 2009 increases in mathematics were observed in every grade with the exception of grade 3. In the same comparison across four years increases were observed in grades 5, 6, 7, 9 and 10 for reading and grades 6 through 10 in writing. The state is working to improve existing methods to provide technical assistance and support to school districts in an effort to increase achievement in all content areas.

The 2005-2006 school year was the first year that a combined 10th grade SBA and 10th grade High School Graduation Qualifying Exam (HSGQE) test were administered. Having a 10th grade SBA allows for comparisons of performance to be made for student achievement across grades 3-10. This is the reason for only displaying and analyzing results since 2006. This analysis was taken from the assessment results that are posted on the Department of Education & Early Development's web site.

**Target #2:** Increase to at least 90% the number of students that achieve a proficient score on all three content areas of the state high school graduation qualifying exam after all opportunities to take the exam.

**Status #2:** The 2009 cohort (students who first took the exam in 2007) has an overall proficient rate of 90.3%, an increase of 2.9% from 2008.



*Methodology: Proficiency rate is the number of cohort students that pass all three content areas (reading, writing, mathematics) of the high school graduation qualifying exam compared to the total cohort population. The 2009 cohort are students who first took the exam two years prior when they were in 10th grade during the spring of 2007, and have had two exam opportunities each year after 10th grade.*

#### Student Cohort Rates

Year	Target
2009	8,552.7
2008	9,110.7
2007	8,721
2006	8,509.5

**Analysis of results and challenges:** The percent of students passing the HSGQE is high compared to the number of students who graduate in the state. For 2009, 88.8% passed the HSGQE compared to the 66% graduation rate. Graduation is measured based on the number of students who meet local course requirements and pass the exam within four years.

**Target #3:** Maintain proficient and higher achievement, and increase growth of individual student achievement on Alaska's Standard Based Assessments (SBA).

**Status #3:** The percentage of students who scored proficient or higher on the SBA in 2008 and maintained that score in 2009 was 65.9% in reading, 60.1% in writing, and 52.5% in mathematics. Comparing percentages from 2008, the 2009 proficient trend is a decline in both reading and math, but an increase in writing.

**Analysis of results and challenges:** Due to the complexity of the data representing the changes in student performance a link is provided below that is demonstrative in displaying the performance of students based on a Matched Comparison Analysis. The analysis to determine if individual student achievement is improving one year relative to the prior year compares only matched students, who are the same students who tested in 2008 and then in a grade level higher in 2009. In reading a total of 59,088 students took a test in 2008 and in 2009 took the next higher grade level reading test. Students score in one of four proficiency levels: far below proficient, below proficient, proficient, or advanced. This analysis allows one to easily determine the number of students who maintained the

same proficiency level, improved proficiency levels, or decreased in their proficiency level. While Alaska students overall perform well, and many students score proficient or higher and maintain that from year to year, a challenge remains to have more students improving performance rather than demonstrating a decline.

The percentage of students that scored proficient or higher in 2008 and maintained that score or improved in 2009 was 65.9% in reading, 60.1% in writing, and 53.5% in math. Those students that demonstrated improvement in their proficiency level score was 11.6% in reading, 13.5% in writing, and 12.2% in mathematics. The percentage of students who declined in performance is a challenge that must be addressed as we have 19.1% of students with a decline in reading performance, 16.5% with a decline in writing performance, and 23.8% with a decline in mathematics performance based on the 2009 relative to 2008 performance scores.

**A1: Strategy - Ensure students are learning the grade level expectations for reading, writing and mathematics as defined in the “Alaska Standards: Content and Performance Standards for Alaska Students” Fourth Edition.**

**Target #1:** Increase the use of strategies to diagnose and target instruction through “Response to Instruction/Intervention” (RTI).

**Status #1:** The department provides training, overview sessions, and has established a statewide leadership team on Response to Instruction/Intervention (RTI) to assist the department in providing guidance on use of the RTI framework to improve instructional practices. The department requires state intervened districts to use RTI.

**Analysis of results and challenges:** RTI is designed to help district staff measure the performance of each individual student and develop appropriate targeted support that meets each particular students needs. The department has organized a statewide leadership team on the implementation of RTI and convened a task force to develop the state guidance document on RTI Implementation.

The draft guidance was presented at the Winter Conference and public comment was sought from all districts. Based on the responses from the public comment, the draft guidance was revised and a revised version was made available in July 2009.

The department has provided training on components of RTI through online resources, at the department's annual Winter Education Conference, and at institutes targeted to staff in selected districts. During the fall 2009, a stakeholder group met to begin the process of defining how RTI may be used as part of the identification of students with learning disabilities. Once the process has been completed the Alaska Special Education handbook will be updated to include the guidance on the use of TRI in the identification of students with learning disabilities. RTI is being implemented in all districts where the state has intervened to improve instructional practices.

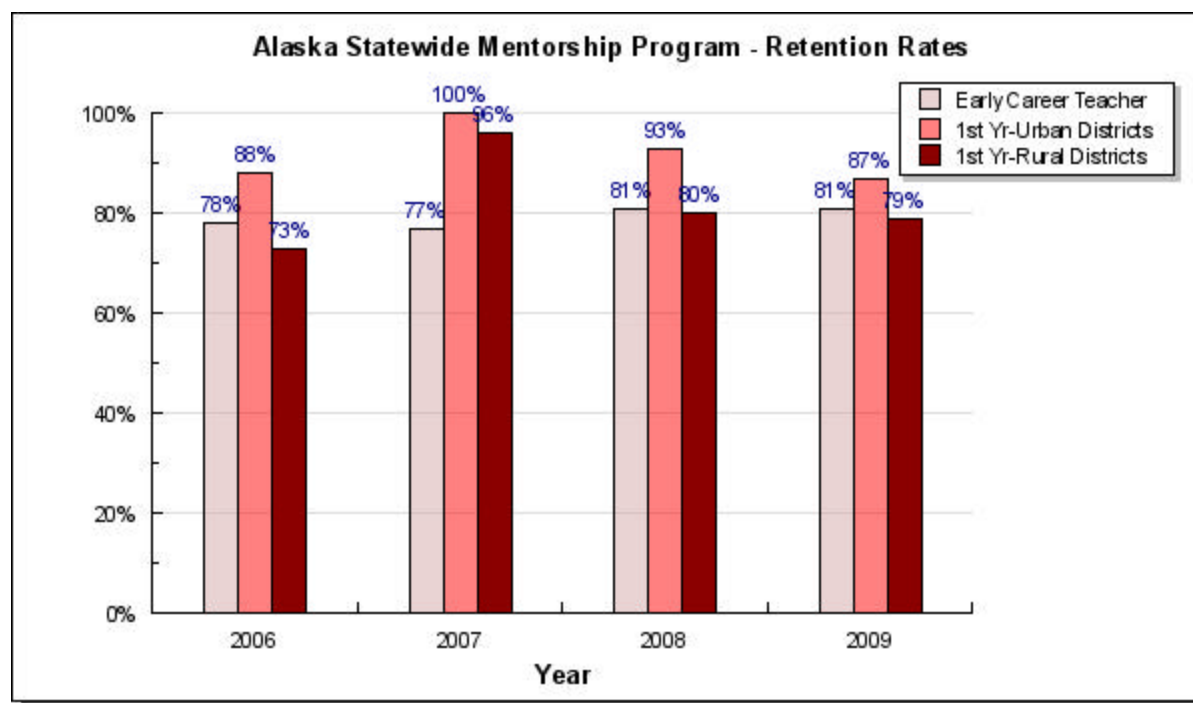
**Target #2:** Ensure that districts understand both the purpose and how to implement the interim and formative assessments.

**Status #2:** The department will offer half-day trainings on formative assessments in Fall 2009 and Spring 2010 for District Testing Coordinators, and four additional trainings for districts in 2009-2010.

**Analysis of results and challenges:** Interim and formative assessment is a process that assists educators to understand the performance of students on a day-to-day basis, and determine changes in instructional practices that are necessary to improve student achievement. The department has provided each district with assessment tools, including an electronic interim assessment system called the Alaska Computerized Formative Assessment system. In some of the areas of interim and formative assessment EED is working to make sufficient progress so that educators have the knowledge and tools necessary to diagnose and improve student achievement.

**Target #3:** Through Mentorship reduce the turnover rate for teachers.

**Status #3:** The Alaska Statewide Mentorship Program documented a preliminary retention of 81% of first-year teachers in all districts in FY09. The retention rate of urban first-year teachers for FY09 was 87% and 79% for rural districts.



*Methodology: Data reflects ASMP activity for the school year*

**Analysis of results and challenges:** The current objectives of the Alaska Statewide Mentor Project (ASMP) are to provide quality mentoring to first- and second-year teachers in order to increase teacher retention and to improve student achievement in those classrooms.

Mentors are teachers with extensive classroom experience, often in a variety of grade levels in urban and rural Alaska. They are released from teaching or approximately 1/3 are retired, to provide mentoring for a two or three year period. Mentors receive formal training in 8, 3-day Mentor Academy sessions held over 2 years. Topics focus on formative (in-class) assessment tools, the analysis of student work, and differentiated instruction.

Nationally, research shows that effective mentoring slows teacher attrition by half while increasing student achievement. Teachers who receive quality mentoring gain the skills of a teacher with 5 years of experience in just 2 years. Mentors also become instructional leaders when they return to their districts.

A five-year study is being conducted currently and final outcomes will be available in Spring 2010. Preliminary results were recently presented to a group of researchers to ensure the quality of the study.

**Target #4:** Ensure that all school districts have tools to train staff about the standards, the assessment system that measures the standards, and about the performance of the students in their district.

**Status #4:** The department has provided all educators in Alaska multiple tools, publications, and trainings regarding the standards and assessment system that allows for analysis of student performance. EED has conducted curriculum alignment institutes and has designed the formative assessment system to be included into District Test Coordinator training.

**Analysis of results and challenges:** All districts have been provided the opportunity to be trained in the standards and assessment system. The content standards, as described by the state grade level expectations, include what each student should know and be able to do in every grade level in the content areas of reading, writing, mathematics and science. The department has developed on-line modules to train current and new staff about the system. The

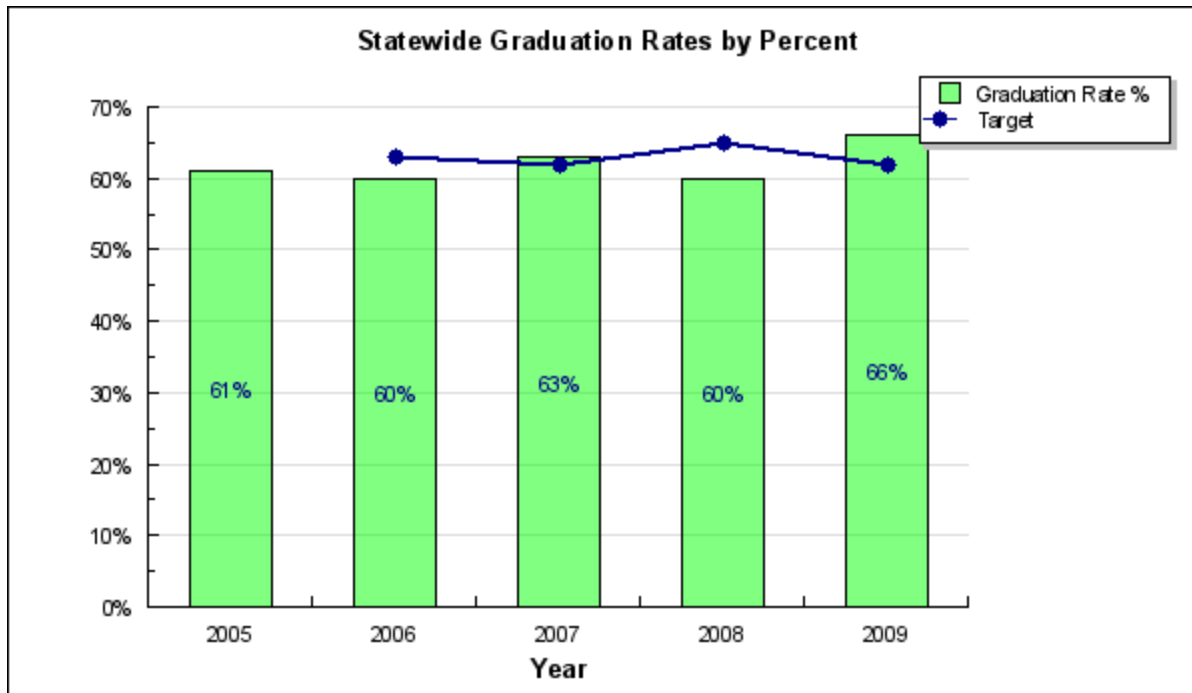
training modules are available on the department web site. The department provides a data analysis system that each district can utilize to understand the performance of each student as well as each group of students within the district. The tool has been available to school districts since the fall of 2008. The Curriculum Framework, created by stakeholders in Alaska, provides the ground work for districts to align their materials and resources to the Alaska Grade Level Expectations (GLEs).

The greatest challenge is finding methods to disseminate training tools across the state and provide for consistent use of the training tools. The department is using telephonic and computer technology to instruct districts to use the data analysis tool. All districts have access to the tools. The department will continue to identify opportunities and resources to enhance the training that is currently available.

## B: Result - Increase the Statewide Graduation Rate.

**Target #1:** Increase the statewide student graduation rates by 2% a year

**Status #1:** 66% of students graduated on time for the 2008-2009 school year, which represents an increase of 3.4% over the 2007-2008 school year.



*Methodology: The numerator is the number of graduates receiving a regular diploma before June 30. The denominator is the sum of the number of graduates, the number of dropouts in grades 9, three school years prior, the number of unduplicated dropouts in grade 10 two school years prior, the number of unduplicated dropouts in grade 11 in the prior school year, the number of unduplicated dropouts in grade 12 during the current year, and the number of grade 12 students who will continue in school the next school year.*

### Statewide Graduation Rates by Percent

Year	No. of High School Grads	Graduation Rate %
2009	8,008	66%
2008	7,855	60%
2007	7,666	63%
2006	7,361	60%
2005	6,905	61%

**Analysis of results and challenges:** A dropout is defined as a student who was enrolled in the district at sometime during the school year and whose enrollment terminated. Dropouts do not include graduates, transfers to state or district approved education programs. Students with absences due to suspension, illness or medical conditions are

not reported as dropouts. As defined by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), a student who leaves the district to obtain a GED is a dropout.

The Department of Education & Early Development is working to formulate an initiative to reduce the dropout rate and increase the graduation rate in Alaska. EED is currently collaborating with Best Beginnings and others in the state to develop a pre-K plan that would give access to Early Learning Programs to anyone in the state who voluntarily participates.

**B1: Strategy - Improve statewide student graduation rates by implementing statewide WorkReady / CollegeReady curriculum and assessment program.**

**Target #1:** Increase the number of students receiving a Career Readiness Certificate

**Status #1:** In 2009, 611 students received a Career Readiness Certificate. School years 2008-2010 are the pilot implementation years for the program. Regulations currently require full implementation in all schools in 2010-2011.

**WorkReady/CollegeReady - Pilot Year Statistics**

Year	CRCs Issued to Students	# of WR/CR Schools	# of all 3 Tests Compltd
2009	611	16	793
2008	188	7	258

*Methodology: The above information reflects WorkReady/College Ready activity during the pilot implementation years and is further explained in the below analysis.*

**Analysis of results and challenges:** Students who received the Career Readiness Certificates are part of the initial pilot program for implementation of the WorkReady/CollegeReady WorkKeys curriculum and assessments. The pilot program included seven high schools in six school districts in the 2007-2008 and 16 high schools in 13 districts in 2008-2009.

The three WorkKeys tests given to students are Applied Math, Locating Information and Reading for Information. The number of 11th grade students who completed the tests in 2008 is 260 in Applied Math, 258 in Locating Information, and 258 in Reading for Information, with a total of 285 students completing all three tests. During 2008-2009, a total of 793 students completed all three tests, while approximately 50 students took one or two of the tests. Completion of all three tests with a minimum score of WorkKeys Level 3 is required in order to earn a Career Readiness Certificate

The Department of Education & Early Development (EED) is working continuously to address implementation challenges including technology, student and staff scheduling concerns, as well as providing comprehensive training to teachers and school counselors. EED continues to build partnerships with businesses and industries, as well as postsecondary providers to ensure the certificates are meaningful and useful to students, and assist them in educational and workforce achievement.